

## a late night conversation by rileyhart

**Series:** [What is Love? A definition by Mike and El. \[1\]](#)

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**Summary:**

Mike wonders if El is lonely down in the basement all by herself, so he goes down to check on her and ends up staying a while. SET DURING THE FIRST HALF OF SEASON ONE.

## a late night conversation

Mike was careful to not let the stairs creak as he crept down them. It had just gone two in the morning, but he wasn't able to sleep. He couldn't stop thinking about El. He hoped she wasn't cold all alone in the basement. He pushed open the basement door lightly. "El?" He whispered into the darkness. "Are you awake?"

He waited, listening to the silence. He was about to turn around and go back to his room when he heard El whisper his name. "Mike?"

"Yeah, it's me," he called back softly.

He saw a torch beam flicker on and could make out El's silhouette sitting up in her blanket fort. He shut the basement door behind him, and skipped quickly down the stairs, to join her in the fort.

He smiled nervously at her, and she returned it.

"i couldn't sleep," Mike told her softly, "I was worried you might be lonely."

El frowned. "Lonely?"

"Lonely, like... uhh..." he had no idea how to explain loneliness, "like when you're by yourself and you feel sad and maybe a bit scared, it feels sort of... dark inside of yourself and you wish you were with someone."

El knew that feeling all too well. She knew it every time *they* there her into *that* room; she felt her bottom lip trembling, and to Mike's horror tears were in her eyes. His own eyes widened in panic. He had made her *cry*, he had made El cry. "El, I'm... I'm sorry!" He said earnestly. "I didn't mean to make you cry." He took her hand gently and squeezed it. She let out a small gasp and look down at his hand before squeezing back; wiping her eyes with the other. They sat in silence for a few moments, just holding the others hand, grateful for their touch, their warmth.

"I know lonely," El whispered, once she'd stopped crying. "They used

to make me lonely when I did something bad.”

“The Bad Men?” Mike asked her.

She nodded. “Yes.”

Mike had no idea what to say, so instead he just squeezed her hand again, and to his delight she smiled again.

“Well I’m glad you’re here now. You’re safe here.” He said reassuringly.

“I’m glad too,” She said softly, looking into Mike’s eyes, and the amount of trust she had in Mike hit him all at once. She trusted him utterly and completely, and he wasn’t going to let her down.

“El,” he said.

“Yes, Mike?”

“I’m never going to let them get you. I promise.” He told her firmly.

She nodded slowly. “Thank you, Mike. I promise too.”

The silence settled over them again, and it was a comfortable sort of quiet, and the two of them decided they liked it, sitting there, holding hands in the torch light.

“Do your parents know where you are?” Mike asked suddenly, breaking the silence. He was thinking of Joyce, how worried she was; he didn’t want El to leave, but he didn’t want her to have to stay hidden her whole life either.

“Parents?”

“Like your mom and dad,”

*Mom and dad.* She knew those words, had heard them before. “Like Papa?” She asked him.

“Yeah,” Mike nodded, “like your Papa.”

But El frowned and looked away from Mike, and that’s when it hit

him. *Her Papa was one of the Bad Men.*

“Oh,” he murmured as it dawned on him, “oh El, I’m sorry, that really sucks.”

She looked back at him, and a smile danced across her face briefly. “What are they like?” She asked him.

“Who?”

“Your parents?”

“Oh... they’re pretty good, I guess. They take care of me, make my dinner and wash my clothes, stuff like that, they take us places in the summer sometimes... they give me pocket money, get me cool birthday presents...”

“What’s ‘birthday presents’?” El frowned.

Mike’s eyes widened as he grinned. “Oh they’re great! Do you know what a birthday is?”

El shook her head.

“Okay, so every year you celebrate the day you were born. That’s your birthday. And people give you presents, which is basically stuff you like wrapped up, and they’re super nice to you all day, and you get cake!”

El smiled, that sounded nice. “What’s ‘cake’?” She didn’t mind asking Mike what things were, he never found it strange that she didn’t know things, he just told her what they were in the most interesting way without hesitation.

“Oh cake is amazing! It’s like this... sweet bread, in the shape of a... short fat cone most of the time. It’s delicious. You’ll love it. When it’s your birthday we can make one together. Chocolate is best.”

“I don’t know when my birthday is, Mike,” she murmured.

He frowned for a moment, before his face split into another smile. “The day we found you. That can be your birthday. November

Seventh.”

El smiled widely, she liked that. “Can I have Eggos as my presents?”

Mike laughed. “You can have what ever you want, El,”

They stayed like that for a long time, talking, laughing, and holding hands well into the night.